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LECTURE

ON

FAILURES IN TEACHING,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,

At Bangor, Maine, August, 1848.

By JOHN KINGSBURY,

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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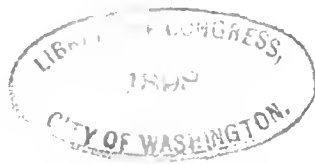
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LECTURE

ON

FAILURES IN TEACHING.

✓

BY JOHN KINGSBURY,
PROVIDENCE, R. I.

It is a common opinion that there is a greater proportion of failures in teaching than in other pursuits of life. This opinion is undoubtedly without foundation. From statistics which approach something like accuracy, it is estimated that ninety persons, out of every one hundred, who engage in business in the city of Boston, are either partially or totally unsuccessful. At the same time it is a conceded fact, that nowhere in our country are business men more enterprising, more industrious, more economical, or more honorable.

Now, if the whole number of persons who engage in teaching, either as a permanent or temporary business, be included, it is certain the number of failures in proportion cannot be so great; and when this estimate is confined to those who either make teaching a permanent employment, or who design to do so, the proportion must be considerably less.

To avoid ambiguity the term *failure* will be used in its common acceptation. There are some persons who have so high a standard for the trial of teachers, that not one in a hundred or perhaps a thousand can be accounted successful. Such a standard, however, is not less evidently absurd than that which in business would not permit any man to be considered successful, unless his fortune equalled that of a Girard or an Astor.

It is no subject of surprise that persons of feeble capacity, of limited acquisitions in knowledge, and of bad moral character, should fail in teaching. Nor do we wonder that those, who excel in branches of knowledge with which they are acquainted, should fail when they attempt to instruct in things concerning which they know little or nothing. These are causes of failure so obvious, that they need not occupy a moment's attention.

All my remarks, therefore, will be founded on the supposition that *teachers have good natural capacity, are well educated, possess good moral character, and are provided with suitable and well furnished rooms for their schools.*

Some of the friends of popular education may here be led to inquire *what* more can be necessary? With talented, well educated and right-minded teachers, placed in good school-houses and furnished with books and other apparatus, surely, *what more can be necessary?* Have not our principal efforts been directed to the attainment of these very things? And shall all our labors in this respect be in vain?

All these things are necessary, but they are only

the preliminaries of a good school. Something more must be done in order to avoid failure. *This* it will be the object of the present lecture to attempt to *show*.

The subject is naturally divided into two parts.

FIRST, failures which arise from the deficiencies of parents;

SECOND, those which result from the deficiencies of teachers.

Irregular attendance. There will be a failure, let teachers possess whatever qualifications they may, if children are not sent to the schoolroom, and kept there long enough for some impression to be made on their minds. *Irregular attendance* may neutralize the benefits to be derived from the best arrangements, and the labors of the best teachers. Some persons *seem* to suppose, that if a child has once entered the path of learning, progress is inevitable; and that however far from his teacher, either in body or mind, there is a kind of magnetic influence, by which he is to be reached, and the teacher is held accountable for his improvement. So far is this from the truth, that a child may attend school a whole year, yet so irregularly or at intervals so far apart, that it will be fortunate, if at the end of the year, he know as much as at the commencement. Irregular attendance operates much more unfavorably on some minds than upon others. Those who are strongly inclined to learn, will readily overcome the evils arising from absence. But those who are indifferent to study, will lose by their absence, not only the lessons of the day, but what is of far greater consequence, the interest however small, which they may have previously felt.

The boy who stays from school in order to hunt, or fish, or skate, will not only feel a positive disinclination to study his arithmetic when at school, but a positive inclination to resume his hunting, fishing or skating. Fortunate will it be for the teacher, if the boy under such circumstances is not more successful in producing an influence among his companions, in these respects, than the master in teaching them arithmetic. The girl too, who is kept at home for the fitting of a mantua-maker, may not only lose her interest in study, but is liable to feel that the adjustment of her dress is more important than the improvement of her mind. There is less objection to detaining children from school that they may assist in home duties; because these are not so attractive to youth as company, dress, or sports. Yet so serious are the losses resulting from absence, that parents even in humble circumstances, should never detain their children at home for domestic duties, except from absolute necessity. Rising a little earlier, more activity and diligence, either on the part of parents or of children, or both, would, in numerous cases of supposed necessity, provide an effectual remedy.

Ignorance. A teacher may fail if the community around him are too *ignorant* to appreciate his labors. He may be so far in advance of them, in his methods of teaching, as well as his qualifications for it, that his very superiority may prove a source of condemnation. This may occur where parents have just knowledge enough to render them self-conceited. Such persons are most likely to suppose themselves the centre of light and truth, and consequently that

others are in darkness just in proportion as they are removed from that centre.

Prejudice. *Prejudice*, however, is a more frequent cause of failure than ignorance. Kind and persevering labor may in due time dispel ignorance. But prejudice is a sterner tyrant, and his tyranny becomes more intolerable by the very efforts which are made to dethrone him. From whatever source it arises, prejudice puts a wrong interpretation upon every thing which a teacher does. If he is kind and affectionate, it is his object "to get round" parents and children; if he is diligent and laborious, it arises from selfishness or ambition. If he manages his school without consulting parents, he is too independent; if he does consult them, he is not independent enough. In short a teacher thus situated can never be right. He is either too rigid or too lax in his government; he is too religious or too indifferent to religion; and if there is nothing in his moral or intellectual character which can form the subject of complaint, prejudice will not scruple to attack his person. He is too tall or too short; too handsome or too ugly; his manners are too gross or too refined; and his dress is too much neglected or it is the subject of too much care.

Want of pecuniary support. Much has been said, and said without sufficient discrimination, about the scanty income of teachers. No intellectual labor is generally so poorly paid. While from some, the shoemaker, the tailor, and the quack doctor receive the highest pecuniary rewards for their services, those who are called to the godlike work of moulding the immortal mind, are paid proportionally a much more

limited sum, and *that* sometimes most grudgingly. At the same time it must be confessed, that the smallest sum paid to poor teachers is money wasted; and he who receives the lowest wages is sometimes most of all overpaid. The great difficulty has been, and there is reason to fear that it is not now sufficiently removed, that there has not been a proper distinction made between the poor and the good teacher; the successful candidate for place having too often been the one who sets the *least* value on his services. A good teacher should receive a remuneration so ample, as to enable him to live respectably in the place where he is appointed to instruct; to avail himself of books, social influence and travel, to such an extent as shall better qualify him for his profession; and to place him, if he practise a wise economy, out of the reach of harrassing anxiety about the means of support. For the want of such compensation, many a deserving teacher has not had the means of improvement, and been obliged to rest satisfied with limited attainments in knowledge, or he has been driven from one place to another, till finally he has quitted the business of teaching in disgust.

Failures in teaching may arise from a want of respect and kind sympathy; interference with government and modes of instruction; dictation of influential individuals, and from a total indifference to the whole subject of education. But numerous as are the sources of failure which arise from parents, it is the more immediate purpose of the present lecture to notice some of the sources of failure arising from teachers themselves.

Should any of my remarks seem inapplicable to those who engage in teaching as a temporary avocation, allow me to express the hope that the time will come, and at no distant day, when persons will become teachers without any more probability of changing their profession, than there is in the practice of law or medicine. When this shall come to pass, one of the most prolific sources of failure will be removed. It is said of the early conqueror of Mexico, that when he landed he destroyed his fleet, so as to remove all possibility or hope of retreat; and thus taught his followers that nothing but victory or death was before them. The more speedily you can destroy the life boats of those who engage in teaching, by which, in case of failure, they design to make good their retreat, the more certainly you will achieve one of the noblest triumphs for the profession.

Want of hard and persevering labor. In the first place, whatever may be the talents and attainments of the teacher he will fail if *he does not work hard*. It seems a very difficult lesson for some to learn, that labor is the basis of all success. The young especially are prone to think that it depends *chiefly* if not *entirely* on chance. Consequently some men spend a whole life in watching chances of success, while they neglect the only sure means of attaining it.

Two merchants, side by side, are engaged in the same business. They possess equal capacity and equal facilities for trade. They are equally moral, and both are valuable members of society. It is therefore matter of surprise to some, that both are not equally prosperous. Let the observer draw nearer

and he will learn the reason. The one is engaged in business both early and late. He personally superintends the minutest transactions. In the absence of a clerk or any other agent, his own hand supplies the place. The work of today is not only finished, but so finished that he is ready to anticipate the work of tomorrow. His neighbor, on the other hand, does not wholly neglect his business. Early rising, however, and an early breakfast are not entirely agreeable; therefore the work of the day begins later. Perhaps the first thing is to answer an order which should have received attention yesterday, or even the day before. Perhaps also that very order, in the absence of a clerk, may be postponed till tomorrow. If pleasure entice him from business, he flatters himself that he can be fully remunerated by greater subsequent diligence. The one either becomes bankrupt or accumulates little wealth, while the other *is rich and increased in goods*; and yet the latter differs from the former in nothing save his untiring industry.

Just so is it in teaching. In no pursuit is unwearied industry more necessary to success. Let no one, therefore, enter upon it who wishes to shun labor, or whose first question is directed to securing his personal ease.

The teacher must also *persevere* in his labors. Many are willing to bestow much labor on the commencement of an enterprise; but it is in expectation that it can be remitted after a few weeks or months. The teacher must labor not only when he is establishing his school, and when making himself acquainted with the branches of knowledge, which he is required

to teach, but he should strive continually to make himself a better teacher, every successive day and year, so long as it is his profession. He must labor too, where the immediate results do not appear to the common observer, or scarcely to himself. It was unseen and unappreciated labor, which gave the finishing touch to the immortal works of a Phidias or a Raphael. So it is with the teacher. The efforts on which ultimate success oftentimes depends, are such as will bring no immediate renown. All men may not need to bestow an equal amount of labor, in order to produce a given effect; but whenever any thing, finished and beautiful, is before us, whether in moral or in intellectual results, whether in the elegant or the useful arts, we may rest assured it is the offspring of labor.

Want of punctuality. Immediately connected with the preceding is another cause of failure, *want of punctuality*. Punctuality not only requires attendance at school regularly and in due season each day, but also the exact fulfilment of each duty at the appointed time. This habit the young should learn, and they sooner learn it from example than from precept. The teacher, therefore, should be to his pupils an eminent example of this virtue. He who is late, loses time which he cannot regain, and in attempting to do so, he is liable to fall into impatience, and thus mar all the exercises of the day. Nor is this all. A teacher who is late, will find his scholars late; and, as deficiencies seldom come single-handed, late scholars will be more or less deficient in their lessons. And what is worse than all, the teacher who

is late, will find that some of his punctual scholars have been very diligent in the use of *their* time. But he will find too, that they have used that time in a way *peculiarly their own*. How many a design, subversive of a teacher's influence, has been begun, matured and executed, while a school has been waiting for his tardiness. He who would prevent evil, rather than correct it after it has taken place, should, if possible, be the first at his school. He should be there not as a spy, but as a friend. It is at such a time that he can, if judicious, gain a most important social influence, as well as acquire that knowledge of individual character which will materially aid him in adapting his instructions to special cases and special exigencies. At the same time he can attend to many things by way of preparation, which, though trifling in themselves, could not be done during the regular hours, and the want of which might occasion no inconsiderable friction in the arrangements of the day.

Want of perseverance in some system. A teacher may be *industrious*, and may *persevere* in his industry; but for the want of perseverance in some *fixed plan or system*, his labors may be rendered unavailing. With great earnestness he introduces some favorite scheme to-day. He has found, as he thinks, the philosopher's stone, and he is resolved that the world shall receive the benefit. He carries his scheme into execution, and possibly sees it attended with good results. But the results are not unmingled good. Difficulties, such as he did not apprehend, meet him, and this beautiful theory is renounced for another, which will in due time share a similar fate. He la-

bors sufficiently, but is too impatient for the results; and as a natural consequence he tries no one plan long enough to form a deliberate judgment. Such a teacher is not much wiser than the child who plants his beans, and frequently plucks them up to see if they have not sprouted.

Love of novelty. Nearly allied to this is another source of failure, *love of novelty*. It is the nature of some men to cleave unto the old because it is old, it is equally the tendency of others to embrace the new merely because it is new. Of these extremes both are unwise and unphilosophical; but the latter is by far the worst. He who adheres to a principle because it has long prevailed, has the assurance that there is something in it which is good, or it would not have been preserved from oblivion. Whereas, he who grasps at every thing new, is ordinarily in the situation of one, who leaves a boat, which would at least carry him safely, if not speedily, to the shore, for one that may sink the very next moment. A teacher should never adopt novelties as a part of his system of instruction, till he has by careful investigation satisfied himself that they are decided improvements; so decided that they will more than counterbalance the evils of change.

Directing the mind to other objects. Dr. Good has somewhere said that the old proverb, "you must not have too many irons in the fire," is very pernicious in cramping the energies of men. He adds you cannot have too many, though you have "poker, tongs and all." Old maxims are not to be discarded without reflection; for frequently they are concentrated

wisdom. There may be some persons, to whom Dr. Good's theory may be applicable, but the majority, if they attempt many things at the same time, will fail in them all. This is specially true of teachers, whose personal labors are required in the instruction of their schools. There may be some who superintend seminaries of learning, having excellent assistants, that may devote a large share of attention to other objects, and yet be eminent in their profession. Be assured, however, that if the mass of teachers allow their minds to be devoted to other objects, though excellent and useful in themselves, and sometimes closely allied to their professional duties, there will be a corresponding loss in the value of their instructions. Whatever withdraws from his school, the fresh feelings, the choice thoughts, and glowing enthusiasm of the teacher's mind, has purloined what it can never replace. The making of a book, the exclusive pursuit of any branch of science or literature, the love of art, the investigation of a principle in mechanics, not to mention business pursuits, habits of speculation or love of pleasure—have frequently undermined a teacher's influence and subjected him to failure.

Dislike of teaching. It is a good general rule that persons should not engage in any business, towards which they feel a repugnance. If circumstances beyond their control have, for a time, thrown them into such a situation, let them first of all subdue that dislike; or if they are unable to do it, let them quit an employment which they can never honor. This is peculiarly applicable to teaching. Some, however, may engage in the profession without any dislike at

first, and yet after a certain period, fall into that disposition. Against such a disposition a teacher should constantly strive. It is incidental to all occupation. There is no station in life which has not its vexations, perplexities and disappointments. The sooner this is understood by the teacher, and manfully met, the sooner he will render himself happy and useful. One of the natural results of turning the mind to other objects of engrossing interest, is the diminution of that love of teaching which is an indispensable requisite to success. That seemingly paradoxical doctrine of the New Testament, *whosoever loveth not, hateth*, has its foundation in the human mind, and is applicable to more than one class of men. He who is obliged to teach, while he has given his heart to some other object, will inevitably fail. He is liable to this, if for no other reason, because he cannot long endure the labor. Every step is one of difficulty where the heart is not engaged. See the child that has been directed to ask the forgiveness of a playfellow, whom he has wronged. So long as he is unwilling, his reluctant, heavy step shows how difficult is the task. See him again. Why is that heavy step changed to one of perfect ease and elasticity? He is going to that same companion; but it is to join him in a holiday excursion. So it is with children of larger growth. If therefore, the teacher dislikes his work, and yet attempts to perform the necessary labor, this labor is liable to become a burden which neither his physical nor his intellectual system can sustain. This leads directly to another source of failure.

Want of health. The health may be impaired not

only by labor, which we feel to be burdensome; but from the performance of cheerful labor and from a strong desire to avoid failure. There is a limit to every constitution beyond which the individual cannot pass with impunity. If there is a class of persons under deeper obligation than any others to understand this limit, and the general laws of health, that class is composed of teachers. It may be thought that parents form an exception; but the influence of parents is necessarily limited to a few, while that of teachers extends to greater numbers. Leaving the general subject to the medical faculty, let me call your attention to one of the laws of health, which requires no depth of science to understand, and yet obedience to it on the part of teachers, should be imperative. *It is the balance to be preserved between physical and intellectual labor.* This law may vary materially in its application to different individuals; and though its requisition may be greater in one instance than in another, that requisition must be fairly and faithfully met. There is no other alternative except by suffering a penalty which is never slight, and sometimes fearfully severe. Teaching is mainly intellectual effort; and the more intensely the intellect is tasked, the more imperatively this law demands corresponding exercise of the body. Some individuals need vigorous and even protracted physical exertion. For others, mere cessation of intellectual labor may be all that is required. Each person should know how *he* can best be relieved from that state of exhaustion which follows all intense mental effort. If this law were better understood, and better obeyed, when

undersrood, we should not see so many failures in professional life; nor so many of our best teachers, male and female, retiring from their stations when they are best fitted to adorn them. There is no hazard in making the assertion, for it is susceptible of the fullest proof, that it is not mental labor which kills professional men. In nine cases out of ten, it is physical inactivity and disregard of the plainest laws of health. No one can study so as to injure himself, if he will take time enough to counterbalance that study by physical exercise. It is a very great mistake to suppose that time cannot be found for this; it is only in this way that time can be extended and made equal to our labors. The freshness and vigor which come from active exercise, will materially diminish the amount of time otherwise necessary for the accomplishment of any intellectual effort. Connected with health, and greatly dependent upon it, are several requisites, the want of which may produce failures in teaching.

Patience. By this is not meant that disposition which will induce a teacher to sit down and calmly endure evils which might easily be corrected. This is only another name for indolence. Patience, on the other hand, is a never-tiring principle, which will enable you to perform cheerfully for the tenth time, that in which you have failed for the ninth, provided you are satisfied that the effort is right and sufficiently important to demand so much attention. While it does not require one to pass over wilful neglect and positive disobedience without rebuke—it does require the teacher to use every suitable means to subdue

such a disposition; and at the same time to repeat cheerfully, again and again, instruction to well disposed pupils however dull they may be. For the want of this heavenly virtue, many a teacher is not only impatient with his scholars, but with the school-house, with the neighborhood or town, in short with every thing by which he is surrounded.

Equanimity, or what perhaps is a better term, *uniformity* of disposition. This is not a passive principle which makes men indifferent to what is passing around them, but it is an active one, which so regulates and controls the whole being, that the teacher is the same to-day as yesterday. For the want of this, teachers punish conduct at one time, which had only occasioned a smile at another, and which probably would not have taken place, had it not been for that smile.

Self control. He who is appointed to teach, cannot do it well without a just and steady control over his scholars. Nor can he control them in this manner, unless he controls himself. This is by no means a trifling work. So mighty is the task, that inspiration pronounces him *who ruleth his spirit, better than he that taketh a city*. *Patience, equanimity and self-control*, are all, in no inconsiderable degree, influenced by health, and cannot be manifested in their best forms without it. Yet so indispensable are they to success, that the teacher who is suffering from indisposition, should strive more strenuously to exercise them, than when in perfect health.

Government. The most difficult part of a teacher's duty, is the government of his school. So important

however, is good government, that some teachers who are deficient in almost every thing else, by this alone, meet with considerable success. For it is an established principle, that no school is good which is not well governed. There are two very common extremes. *Some govern too much.* You may always hear the sound of the ferule, the snapping of the whip, or what perhaps is quite as bad, the noise of the tongue. The machinery of government, whatever it may be, is always in motion, and comparatively little time is left for the important work of instruction. On the other hand, *some teachers govern too little.* They fall into the opposite extreme, and treat children as if it were impossible for them to do wrong; or at least, as if there was little difference between the right and the wrong. In such a school you are not troubled with the machinery of government—but the total want of all government. Noise and confusion usurp the place of order, and the genius of improvement flies far from such a scene. Between these two extremes there is a happy medium. It is found in that school where the teacher directs and controls every thing, yet in so kind and quiet a way, that the scholars seem to govern themselves. Every thing is subjected to law, but the machinery of government is scarcely perceptible.

Self-conceit. No persons should so carefully guard themselves against self-conceit as teachers. Their professional intercourse is so necessarily limited to their inferiors, that they are liable to over-rate their own attainments, and rest satisfied with present acquisitions. Nothing will sooner impair their influ-

ence. It renders them disgusting to other persons, destroys the respect which is necessary to sanction their labors, and what is worse, closes every avenue of improvement. It may be assumed as an axiom, that he who teaches well to-day, and yet ceases to make further acquisitions in knowledge, will soon cease to be a good teacher. The current of society is onward; and he who in any respect remains stationary will soon be left behind. Indeed it is impossible, from the nature of mind, to remain stationary. If therefore we are not making progress in knowledge, we are losing ground, and very soon it may be truly said of us, that *we are behind the age*. It is true there are certain principles in education, which are so well established that they will remain the same forever. In the application of these principles, however, there is room for the most studied ingenuity. At the same time there is a wide field where first principles are either undiscovered, or as yet quite unsettled. *Self-conceit*, or any other thing which prevents the teacher from aspiring after higher attainments, should be most studiously avoided. His mind should be ready for the reception of knowledge from every, even the humblest source. By failing to do this, teachers have placed in the way of their advancement, the most insurmountable obstacles with which they have ever been troubled, and drawn down upon their profession the severest satires of the most gifted minds. There is one way, *and, only one*, in which teachers can prove, not only that Dominie Samson and Ichabod Crane are caricatures of the profession, but also that they have not sufficient resemblance to preserve them from merited oblivion. *It is by indi-*

vidual and united aspiration after the highest moral and intellectual endowments.

Fondness for hobbies. All men have their hobbies. Teachers not only have them, but are more prone than other men to ride them to death. This arises from two causes; first, their professional intercourse is with their inferiors in knowledge, by which they over-estimate themselves; second, they have less opportunity than others to have their hobbies put to the test of severe investigation. One teacher delights in arithmetic, and he makes every thing bend to his favorite pursuit. Another is equally delighted with geography, and much time must be devoted to it, even to the exclusion of other studies equally important. Or the favorite may be language, rhetoric, elocution, or any other of the numerous branches now introduced into schools. If undue prominence is given to any one of these, there will be a corresponding loss in reference to the others. It is not the business of teachers to make great arithmeticians, or great linguists merely; but to advance their pupils in every species of knowledge necessary to their situations in life, and to unfold in harmony all the faculties, moral, physical and intellectual. The former course presents a much stronger temptation. A more brilliant exhibition can easily be made in the presence of spectators. A much greater reputation can in a short time be gained, and much severe labor and patient endurance can be avoided. Yet is it too much to suggest, that such a reputation may be more easily lost; and that we hence learn the cause of the failure of some celebrated schools and some very celebrated teachers? There is not a gifted teacher, who if he will push

some two or three favorite studies, especially with reference to some very gifted pupils, cannot gain more reputation in six months, than in half that number of years, by attempting the harmonious cultivation of all the powers of every one of his scholars. Yet it is only this latter method which is pursued by the *really* good teacher; and it is this method only, which can sustain a teacher's reputation for any considerable number of years in the same place.

It would be easy to swell the list of causes having more or less influence in producing failures in teaching; austere, uncouth and embarrassed manners; want of kind and sympathizing affections; defective powers in the communication of knowledge; rash and hasty temper; dislike of children; imprudence in speaking, especially of things communicated in confidence—but the enumeration shall be closed with a topic, which might have preceded all others, as it blends more or less with them all, and which, if not possessed in some degree, will render all other acquisitions comparatively useless.

It is common sense. Common sense enables the teacher to adapt himself and his instructions precisely to the *place*, which is the scene of his labors. Under the influence of this, he looks at men and things, just as they *are*, and not as they *should be*, or as he might *wish* them to be. He does not commence his school with a beautiful theory, adapted only to fairy land, or with a plan well adapted to some real meridian, but not at all to *that* where he is; he adapts or modifies or makes a plan, exactly fitted to the peculiar circumstances of the neighborhood, district, town or city, where he is called to teach. He knows full

well, that what would be well suited to the habits and manners of a city, would be perfectly absurd in the country; and that the converse of this is equally true. While he feels under obligation to set up a high standard for himself and others, he takes care that this standard is not only a practicable one, but one which shall seem practicable to other reasonable persons. His maxim is, *to do all he can*, if he *cannot do all he would*. Common sense enables the teacher to effect judicious reforms. He does not begin them by unnecessarily shocking the prejudices of people. He first gains their confidence, before he attempts reform, and then attempts no more than he can reasonably hope to accomplish. If different methods are equally practicable in the attainment of his end, he will select that one which excites least prejudice; and in addition to this, he will take particular pains to demonstrate, step by step, the utility of the change.

Common sense also instructs a teacher to rely upon himself for success. Some persons are prone to rely upon political, sectarian or family influence; and some even make loss of health or loss of property a claim to patronage. These things may aid a teacher in establishing a school, but they will not enable him to sustain it for any length of time. He hence learns that if his school is to prosper, it must be by his own individual exertions.

Many teachers for the want of common sense, fail in the management of financial matters. The success of a particular school, as well as the cause in general, is made to turn upon the skill of the teacher in this respect. The want of this skill is followed by disappointment, discouragement and failure. Some teachers

make expenditures, either without duly considering whether they can afford them; or whether by so doing, they shall not bring themselves under great embarrassment. A teacher who judges incorrectly in this respect, not only wastes his money, and endangers the success of his enterprise, but what is far worse, he is liable to lose his reputation as a man of good judgment. Without this a teacher is like Samson with his shorn locks.

If a man has a fortune and can imitate a Fellenburg, it is a subject of congratulation that he should spend his money in so noble a cause. The majority of teachers however, must by their labor obtain the means of living; and if they make expenditures beyond their ability, they seldom gain even the thanks of those for whose benefit the sacrifice is made, but more frequently draw down upon themselves their censure, however undeserved.

Professional men sometimes *seem* to act as if it were beneath their attention to understand matters of business, as if they thought their professional ability was great, in the direct ratio of their inability to comprehend the value of money, or to understand the every day things of life. On the other hand, it is a melancholy thing, to see a man who has enjoyed the blessings of moral and intellectual refinement, so give himself to the pursuit of business, the accumulation of wealth, as never to manifest aspirations after higher enjoyments. Is there not, however, a happy medium between these two extremes? May not a man become eminent in his profession, rise to the highest point of moral and intellectual improvement, and gain a wide range of knowledge in other things even of the

minutest kind? Is it not said of Roger Sherman, that so minute and various was his knowledge, that he made every tradesman with whom he conversed, believe him to belong to his particular craft? Could we not more confidently insure the success of many who engage in teaching, if they possessed more of this same kind of knowledge? If it could not be sometimes truly, as well as sarcastically said of them, they have all kinds of sense except common sense? There is no doubt that teachers ought to possess sufficient knowledge of business affairs, to give them influence with practical men. Otherwise practical men will set aside their best suggestions and their wisest plans, on the ground that they are mere book-worms or men of the closet.

It may be thought that these suggestions have unnecessarily assumed a negative form; that the whole might have been said, and said in a better way, under the title of Requisites to success in teaching. The present mode however, has been adopted with the hope that a more lasting impression may be made upon the minds of teachers.

The suggestions have all been made, on the supposition that teachers have good natural capacity; sufficient acquired knowledge; good moral character; and are provided with suitable, and well-furnished rooms for their schools.

Such teachers may fail, if children are not sent regularly to school; if the community around them are ignorant and influenced by prejudice, and do not furnish a competent support.

They may fail for the want of sufficient and persevering industry, punctuality, and perseverance in

some given plan or system; from love of novelty, directing the mind to other objects, dislike of teaching, impaired health; want of patience, equanimity and self control; from bad government, self conceit, fondness for hobbies; and finally for the want of good common sense.

I have just glanced at a few of the causes of failure in teaching. By no means are they to be viewed as all equally important in their bearing on success. Yet so far as my observation extends, through a period of many years experience in teaching, no persons such as were supposed at the commencement of this lecture, have failed, without one or more of these causes having contributed to that effect. What then shall be done to diminish the number of such failures in the future? Let the *causes* of failure stand out as warnings to every one who enters the pathway of this profession; and let the requisites to success burn as so many beacon fires, to guide him onward and upward, till his labors shall be crowned with glorious success. And above all, let him, remembering his own weakness, repair to that Fountain, from whence alone, can come the strength, and the wisdom which he needs. If he should be so fortunate as to win applause, *that wisdom* will preserve him from the fatal effects of flattery and self-conceit. If he should find his fondest hopes blighted, his best motives misinterpreted, and his most self-denying actions wickedly traduced, *that strength* will confirm his heart, and nerve his arm for still nobler efforts, till he shall gain his final crown.

[From Professor C. C. Jewitt, of Brown University, March 7, 1848.]

Messrs. W. D. Ticknor & Co.:

I have received and carefully examined the French books of the Count de Laporte, which you kindly sent me.

I do not hesitate to express to you the opinion that I have formed, that the Grammar is by far the best that exists in our language for the thorough study of French. We have had no lack of excellent elementary treatises, but we have long needed a complete grammar—one which should furnish full and satisfactory answers to the questions which present themselves to the thoughtful student, which should be for Englishmen, what the Grammar of Girault, Duvivier, and Napoleon Landais are for Frenchmen. The Count de Laporte has endeavored to supply this want, and he has accomplished this task in an able and scholarlike manner.

The "Exercises," and the "Self-Teaching Reader" are admirable works. The latter contains a philosophical analysis of the sounds of the French language, and a clear and accurate exposition of their combinations.

I will merely add, that I intend to use these books with my classes.

[From Geo. W. Greene, Professor of Modern Languages in Brown University.]

Two things distinguish the Grammars of Count de Laporte from all other French Grammars which we have had occasion to examine—the clearness of its arrangement and its general completeness. And we use the word completeness in preference to any other, for it expresses our meaning exactly. For by completeness in a work of this kind we mean full and satisfactory answers to all the questions which can present themselves to the mind of the thoughtful student in the course of reading or writing, and not answers merely in the form of rules, but all the illustrations from standard authors, which are necessary to render the rule intelligible, and impress it upon the memory. Now this is what Count de Laporte has done, and he has done it too in a manner which leaves very little to be asked for. Take, for a short example, the paragraph on the use of *pas* and *point*, or for a fuller one, his exposition of that thorny pass in French, the use of the imp. perf. def. and perf. indef.

It is not fair to ask of a writer more than he pretends to give you, and therefore we shall not condemn Count de Laporte for having treated each subject as a whole, instead of separating the origin and formation of words from the principles of their connexion. In a philosophical work, like Becker's German, or Kuglner's Greek, or the lamented Nordheimer's admirable Hebrew Grammar, this division is essential, for the two subjects are so distinct, when considered from this point of view, that it would be impossible to form a clear idea of either, if they were taken together. But Count de Laporte has aimed rather at a full and systematic exposition of the facts of the language, and this he has accomplished very successfully. The reader will find each part of speech fully discussed in separate sections, the word first, and then the rules which govern its application. Pages are devoted to the article alone, and no one who wishes to master this difficult subject, will think there is a page too much. Let any one study this chapter in connexion with the Exercises, and he will find that he has little left to learn which any grammar that we know of can teach him. The exercises are judiciously arranged, and form an indispensable accompaniment of the grammar. Of the Self-Teaching Reader, it is not too much to say, that it is the only satisfactory work of the kind we have ever met with; the only one which contains a philosophical analysis of the sounds of the French language, and a clear and accurate exposition of the principles of their combination.

In our own course, for we write *ex cathedra*, we have used De Laporte after Ollendorf, whose work (we speak only of the French) is far from meeting the wants of the advanced student.



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[From Rev. H. Winslow, Bos

I consider it a very accurate and thorough Grammar of the more common Elementary matter, it is replete with observances of the peculiarities of the French language. . . . I am free to see French Grammar extant among us, which exhibits the idioms more thoroughly.

[From Daniel Leach, Teacher, Boxbury.]

I have examined with care and attention the series of French books prepared by Count de Laporte, and I have no hesitation in saying that I think them the most complete and philosophical that I have ever seen. They are such books as a thorough practical teacher only could have prepared, and one admirably adapted to remove the difficulties that an English student would meet with in studying French. I shall henceforth use them in my school.

[From Prof. Arnault, French Teacher, Boston.]

* * * Indeed, I do not know any better Grammar, not only in this country, but in the world, for his purpose. It contains all the rules, difficulties, and niceties of the French Language, carefully collected from the very best authorities; and besides, the whole work is now presented on the new plan of the "abrege" of the *grammaire nationale* (by Besherelle, Paris) an improvement which makes this edition very valuable, clear, and convenient. * * * In my opinion it ought to be, and will be in time, in the library of everybody in America who wants to improve his French, and especially of all conscientious teachers.

[From the Philadelphia Saturday Courier.]

"The auspices under which these works are presented, will entitle them to respectful consideration. They claim, and obviously possess, considerable novelty. The author would seem to have constructed the series with a view to exhaust all the resources of the language, to leave none of its usages, however new or irregular, unprovided for. It contains everywhere the evidence of care and scholarship, and will no doubt become a work of standard character. * * The whole series will be regarded with interest by all who are directly engaged either in teaching or learning the French Language. They are printed with unusual neatness, on good paper, and are well bound.

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